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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

35TH YEAR

MARCH 13, 1978

FARMER TO CONSUMER

Fresh market produce from familiar roadside stands and pick-it-yourself operations continues to attract an increasing number of customers and are becoming thriving businesses in 41 states, and the District of Columbia. According to U.S. Department of Agriculture figures, roadside stands in just 17 states grossed more than \$200 million in 1976.

Nationwide figures reveal there are now 8,915 roadside stands and 3,069 pick-your-own operations. There are also 541 of the more permanent type of farmers' markets. Most items sold through direct marketing outlets are fruits and vegetables, but often include eggs, dairy products, meat, poultry, baked goods, nuts, honey and even shrubbery and hand-crafts.

Farmers view direct marketing as an alternative outlet to increase income. Consumers see it as a way to obtain fresh, high-quality food cheaper than at the supermarket by eliminating overhead and packaging costs.

What's the future for this type of marketing?

Under the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976, eight states were awarded funds last year to encourage and promote direct-marketing activities. Projects included joint federal-state efforts to aid low-income consumers and to help farmers with limited resources in direct-marketing programs.

Several states are arranging conferences between farmers and consumers and encouraging closer communication.

SHORT TAKES

ON FOOD

What caused food prices to rise in 1977? Two-thirds of the 6 percent increase in grocery store prices resulted primarily from higher prices for fish and imported foods, especially coffee. Most of the increase in domestic food prices resulted from assembling, processing, transporting and distributing food from the farmer to the consumer.

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Farm prices for food were up 2.2 percent in 1977 over 1976, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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There will be less beef and more pork in 1978. Meat prices, which have been rising this winter, are expected to level off soon. Lower pork prices should help offset further price advances for beef.

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If you ask for coffee or tea, the odds are increasing that it might be tea these days. Tea drinking is up 10 percent over a year ago. Prices are higher, too. A further increase is expected, bringing the national average price of tea to \$1.22 per 48 bags. Tea imports for 1977 were estimated at a record 92,000 metric tons---up sharply from the previous high of about 82,000 metric tons in 1976. Coffee prices will remain relatively high.

FOOD CLIPS

Lowfat milk can be made at home by mixing half whole milk with half skim or instant nonfat dry milk, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists.

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Always keep cultured buttermilk chilled. If allowed to warm, it may separate. If it does separate, just stir it. Dried buttermilk, a by-product of making butter, is used in pancake mixes and bakery products.

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Regular lowfat or skim chocolate flavored milk can be heated for quick and easy hot chocolate. Use chocolate-flavored milk in cookie or cake recipes that call for both milk and chocolate or cocoa.

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You can replace some of the milk in your diet by using yogurt, ice cream, or ice milk---but at added cost.

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The U.S. Grade AA or Grade A shield is most commonly found on butter, and sometimes on Cheddar cheese. Only products that are officially graded may carry the USDA grade shield. USDA provides the inspection and grading services for a fee.

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GARDEN WRITERS---FREE PUBLICATIONS

While supply lasts, free, single copies of the following booklets are available from the Publications Office, GPA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

- "Pruning Shade Trees and Repairing Their Injuries", Home & Garden Bulletin #83
- "Selecting Fertilizers for Lawns and Gardens", Home & Garden Bulletin #89
- "Growing Flowering Annuals", Home & Garden Bulletin #91

ABOUT

YOU

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ME

Joanne Brown, former Daily News-Miner police reporter has been appointed editor of the Alaska Woman magazine.....June Allen Smith, has been associate editor for the Beaumont (Tex.) Enterprise Journal, is now the Family Living Editor. She's also president of the Texas Press Women, District 8.....Calvin Gatch, the only "Food and Fiber" editor we know, is with the Telegraph Herald in Dubuque, Iowa...Soon to be published is the new Your Place magazine by McCalls. Karen Shakesky is the Home Features Editor...We understand that Ann Waters, publisher and editor of The News, a weekly in the farming area of Swedesboro, N.J., is the only woman weekly editor-owner in the state..Denice Darrow, '74 grad of the University of Maryland and former managing editor of the Prince George's Post, a weekly, is the new editor of the Co-op Consumer in Greenbelt, Md....Veronica Volpe, long time food editor of the Pittsburgh Press, has retired. The Food Section is being handled by William Trosene temporarily. Eleanor Ostman, president of the News paper Food Editors and Writers Association, is working on the group's first national Food News Forum, April 19-21, 1978, in San Jose, Calif....Carol Tucker Foreman, Assistant Secy. for Food and Consumer Affairs at USDA, will speak at the Forum.....More than 100 food editors are expected to attend.....According to Editor and Publisher magazine, the trend now is for larger food newspaper sectionsThey're growing due to surveys indicating "readers want more food coverage."

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